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Hawaii-based Soldiers connect with Indonesian counterparts

By Kevin Downey, U.S. Army, Pacific Public Affairs

BOGOR, West Java, Republic of Indonesia -- As U.S. and Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Army Division Soldiers work together during exercise Garuda Shield April 16-27, members of the Hawaii Army National Guard (HIARNG) are learning the similarities they share with their Indonesian counterparts.

Approximately 70 Indonesian soldiers from the Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Army Division's 1st Infantry Division, based in Bogor, and 80 U.S. Soldiers from the 9th Regional Readiness Command, U.S. Army, Pacific, U.S. Army Reserve, the Hawaii Army National Guard and 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Alaska are participating in U.N. peace keeping support operations training.

The goals of the exercise are to improve the Indonesian and U.S. armies' capabilities in peace support and civil military.

Hilo-native Sgt. Dustin Amaral is the assistant operations non-commissioned officer for the exercise scenario. "Working with the Indonesian Soldiers, I've been learning that the character of a Soldier stretches across borders," he said. "We're both professional and dedicated in our mission."

The full-time National Guardsmen said this is his first international exercise and he is getting valuable training he can take back to Hawaii.

"Seeing how the Indonesian army operates gives me another perspective on how I can do my job," he said.

Capt. Jon Ishikawa, of Mililani, Hawaii, said he believes the U.N. peace keeping scenario provides a good launching point for the two nations from which to work together.

"We are both learning together how to use our militaries to support U.N. peacekeeping operations," he said. "In so doing, our two nations learn how to operate together.

"That's the point of why we're here," he said.

The name Garuda comes from a mythical predatory bird in the Indonesia culture.



Hilo-native Sgt. Dustin Amaral briefs the Indonesian and U.S. contingent on current operations during Garuda Shield April 23. He is the assistant operations non-commissioned officer for the exercise scenario. “Working with the Indonesian Soldiers, I’ve been learning that the character of a Soldier stretches across borders,” he said. “We’re both professional and dedicated in our mission.”



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